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October 26, 1988

Oscar deBrum
Chief Secretary
Republic of the Marshall Islands
Majuro, MI 96960

Dear Oscar:

In the course of our September 23rd meeting, I committed to provide consolidated recommendations as to how the RMI might wish to treat the soil of certain islands so as to substantially mitigate the uptake of cesium 137 into food crops.

DOE suggests the following:

An initial application of 1200 lbs per acre of potassium chloride KCl (when K is given as K_2O), applied with any type commercial spreader. This is what is now being done by the Bikinians, through DOI, at Eneu.

The cost of material (KCl) for 200 acres is \$46,000 F.O.B. Oakland, California.

This application has demonstrated reduction of cesium 137 levels in food crops to as low as 2pCi/gram and lasts a minimum of four years. Four years is the length of time since our initial application, although the duration of the effect of one application may indeed be greater. This should be monitored as we proposed at the meeting.

Obviously, what this achieves is the "buying" of a certain number of years in which food crops contribute much less to total dose of a user population, and meanwhile the natural decay further reduces the overall levels of radioactivity.

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Generally, any areas with relatively high levels of cesium 137 and which are good food sources could be considered by RMI as candidates for treatment. We are sensitive to the fact that different atoll leadership groups have varying motivations and ideas as to the state of certain islands and resettlement options. We do not presume to "tell" any group or RMI what to do. However, islands which might be considered are:

1. Eneu and Bikini
2. The six planted northern islands at Enewetak (Aej, Lujor, Aomon, Bijere, Lojwa, and Alembel)
3. Enjebi, if replanted and resettled
4. Rongelap and Arbor Islands

This in no way implies that Rongelap or Arbor are now radiologically unfit for habitation, but rather fits in with Dr. Kohn's recommendation in the Rongelap Reassessment Project Report July 22, 1988 which suggests the northern islands of Rongelap be considered for contamination control, receiving more treatment than Rongelap Island "...which would receive little if any)."

There may be other candidate islands at Bikini, such as Nam, Enedrik, Eneman, Lele, and Aerokojlol, depending whether it is decided to plant them with food crops.

As I implied earlier, decisions of this nature are rightfully to be made by Marshall Islanders. We understand that many factors, political, emotional, psychological, and economic can and will impact these decisions. We make the above suggestions and observations with that in mind, and reaffirm our willingness to work with you as your government, the Claims Tribunal, and most importantly the directly affected people deal with these issues.

Harry U. Brown
Deputy Program Manager
Office of Emergency Response
and Program Analysis

October 26, 1988

cc:

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J. M. Weisgall, Washington, DC
D. R. Anderson, Wilmer, Cutler and
Pickering, Washington, DC
Ishmael John, Senator, Republic of
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Tomaki Juda, Mayor, Republic of the
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Henchy Balos, Minister, Republic of
the Marshall Islands, Majuro, MI
Jetan Anjain, Senator, Republic of
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